

REMARKS

Claims 1-4, 6-26 and 28-55 are present in the instant application.

The claims have been amended to more clearly set forth the present invention. In particular claims 1, 32, 49, 50, 52, 54 and 55 have been amended to make it clear that the ordering of the customized stamp occurs at the remote location with respect to the central authorized computer system.

The present invention is directed to a method and system for allowing the purchasing of customized stamps that incorporate personal images as a part of the official postal stamp. In this regard, as set forth in independent claim 1, the central authorizing system has a computer for forwarding information to at least one ordering system for allowing customizing and ordering of the official postal stamp by the user or wherein the user provides an image for incorporation as part of the official stamp.

The Examiner, in rejecting claims 1-4, 6-12, 15-26 and 29-54, has rejected the claims under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Postal Service (USPS) in view of an article by Glen Stephens, and further in view of an article by Marilyn J. Brackney, Microsoft Paint, and Brasington et al. The Examiner acknowledges that USPS does not disclose ordering custom postal stamps but relies on the Stephens article for the purchase of personalized postage stamps. However, the Examiner further acknowledges that neither of these two references disclose allowing customers to forward images to the issuing authority. However, the Examiner cites Brackney as teaching a system and method that discloses an image being transferred electronically. Thus, the Examiner argues it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to allow customers to order personalized postage stamps from USPS. With regard to the USPS reference, this is simply directed to ordering standard official stamps over the Internet. There is no teaching or suggestion of a central authorizing computer system as taught and claimed by Applicant. Further, there is no teaching or suggestion of forwarding information to the remote order station as taught and claimed by Applicant. While Glen Stephens teaches personalizing a tab associated with an official postage stamp, there is no teaching or suggestion in Stephens in doing so over a communication network as taught and claimed by Applicant. Applicant respectfully submits that

there is no teaching, suggestion or motivation to modify Stephens with the USPS. First, as set forth on the second page of Stephens, collectors or dealers had to wait in line in order to obtain these prints. The article also reads “A humorous notation was made in the instructions that were handed to each potential stamp subject, after advising them that they took ‘no responsibility for any person’s personal presentation’ ... The notation read: ‘Anyone deliberately making inappropriate gestures during photography will automatically forfeit their order and a refund will not be provided’” The article also sets forth that collectors stood in front of one of several expensive digital cameras on site. The images were captured and then processed through customized software imprinted on site. Clearly, this does not teach or suggest ordering over a communication network. As the article implies, it teaches away from combining this with USPS. As noted, certain inappropriate gestures made during photography will forfeit the order and a refund will not be provided. This implies there was some type of review. Therefore, the simple ordering of stamps, as set forth in USPS, is not appropriate for the Stephens system. Accordingly, there is no motivation to make the combination as suggested by the Examiner. As set forth in independent claim 1, the central authorizing computer forwards information to at least one remote ordering system for allowing customizing and ordering of the official postal stamps. This information can include a variety of things including providing information regarding what is suitable and not suitable for printing. It also provides information that later on the images may be reviewed for appropriateness. The present invention clearly provides for this by providing a central authorizing computer through which the customized stamps must be ordered. Further, the present invention provides the convenience of ordering images at remote convenient locations, such as a PC in a home. This is clearly different from standing in line as taught by Glen Stephens. The present invention also provides for the control and appropriate producing of customized stamps that are suitable to be produced. Further, the Stephens article does not deal with images provided by the user but instead relies on images captured by the photographer. Thus, there is no teaching or suggestion of using images provided by the user but instead it relies on images that are captured by camera controlled by the authorizing agents. Applicant respectfully submits that the USPS and/or Glen Stephens fail to teach the invention as taught and claimed by Applicant in a

number of respects. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 and its dependent claims are patentably distinct.

Similarly, claim 32 includes many of the same limitations set forth in independent claim 1, including the providing of customizing and ordering of official postal stamps that incorporate user provided images in the official postal stamp. In addition, claim 32 requires that the ordering occurs with respect to instructions and selections provided by the central authorizing computer system. There is no teaching or suggestion in any of the references cited of providing instruction user selections options provided by the central authorizing computer as taught and claimed in independent claim 32. Accordingly, claim 32 is patentably distinct for these additional reasons.

With regard to the Marilyn J. Brackney reference, as previously pointed out, this is directed to merely forwarding of an image to the U.S. Postal Service for consideration for adoption in an official postal stamp. Certainly, there is no ability of customizing and ordering of personal postal products that can be ordered by the customer over a communication network. Further, there is no motivation why this reference should be combined with either of the two previous references, i.e. the Glen Stephens reference or the USPS reference. In particular, USPS reference as previously noted, is simply directed to selling of stamps. The Stephens reference is directed to capturing an image of a customer and providing that on a tab adjacent the stamp, whereas the Marilyn Brackney reference is just simply submitting of an image to the U.S. Postal Service for consideration. The Microsoft Paint reference is nothing more than a tool that is provided on windows. Clearly, there is no motivation or suggestion in any of the references cited for combining Microsoft Paint with any of the previous references. With regard to Brasington et al. reference, this is simply directed to a kiosk for capturing images put on an official stamp. However, here again there is no remote ordering or central authorizing agency for assuring that appropriate matter is provided on the stamp.

Independent claim 42 is directed to a computer software for producing ordering custom official postal stamps and closely aligns with independent claim 1 and therefore is patentably distinct for the same reasons previously discussed.

Independent claims 49 and 50 are directed to a system for ordering customized official postal stamps. These systems include similar limitations to claim 1 and therefore are patentably distinct for the same reasons previously discussed. In particular, the central authorizing computer allows communication over a communication network with regard to remote ordering system wherein the authorizing system program forwards information to the remote ordering system that allows modification of the image and ordering of customized official postal product. There is no teaching in any of the references of forwarding to the remote location information that is used for customizing or providing modifications to the images which are then used for incorporating personal images to form a customized official postage stamp as taught and claimed by Applicant. Similarly, claims 52, 54 and 55 are patentably distinct for the same reasons previously discussed.

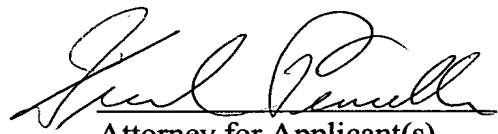
The Examiner, in many of the dependent claims, has made broad sweeping statements that it would be obvious to do certain modifications, however, there is no support to back up the teaching or suggestion made by the Examiner. With respect to dependent claim 4, which sets forth that the information that is provided to the remote location includes instruction how to modify an image for use on a postal stamp and for ordering the customized official postage stamp, there is no teaching or suggestion in any of the references cited to provide such limitation. The Examiner states with regard to claim 6, that USPS discloses acceptable criteria for image content and easily can be used on official postal stamp, and Brackney discloses that the USPS has criteria for stamp subject selection. First, the Brackney reference discloses that the criteria is for the selection of images, not how images can be customized as taught and claimed by Applicant. The Brackney article simply sets forth that the stamp must include certain information such as person or place. There is no discussion as to what is appropriate or inappropriate. Since this is not directed to customized images, such information is not needed. With regard to the USPS document, since USPS is dealing with stamps totally designed at the USPS, the information provided for criteria for use of customized stamp is irrelevant. The criteria set forth in USPS is directed to the criteria of certain individuals for eligibility for placement on commemorative stamps. The present invention is directed to providing appropriate criteria for the appropriateness of particular images on a postage

stamp which is a totally apart and distinct criteria required for that of the present invention. With regard to claims 9, 10, 11 and 12, the Examiner simply states that it would have been obvious to make the modification as set forth therein, while not providing any particular support or evidence that it would be obvious to make such modification. There is no teaching or suggestion in the prior art of providing the ability of selecting and/or modifying size, shape, color, or orientation of customized images set forth in claim 12 or the further providing of text for use in an official postal product over a communication network. In any event, these dependent claims depend at least ultimately upon independent claims and are therefore patentably distinct for the same reasons previously discussed.

There is also no teaching or suggestion of providing confirmation receipts as set forth in claims 23, 36 and 46 or the providing of a status of the order as taught and claimed by Applicant. The Examiner just simply relies that it would have been obvious to do so based on other things. However, Applicant respectfully submits that the prior art fails to teach or suggest such. Certainly, none of the references teach or suggest modifying or providing the ability for modifying the images or amount on an official postal product as taught and claimed by Applicant as set forth in claims 29 and 30.

In view of the foregoing it is respectfully submitted that the claims in their present form are in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Frank Pincelli', is written over a horizontal line.

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